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as a drastic medicine for the human race; the man of action, who has run the gamut of heroic experience, affirms that "we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Stand, therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and

having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace . . . be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might."

Thus the two. The thoughts their brains distilled are active unto this day, those of one, the poison for a people, those of the other, a tonic for the world.

THE FAITH OF A MIDDLE-AGED MAN

REV. HENRY KINGMAN, D.D.
Claremont, California

Chapter IV. The Life as a Witness to the Truth

In the reminiscences of her girlhood, given in the autobiography of Frances Power Cobbe, is the following pathetic passage:

Then ensued four years on which I look back as pitiful in the extreme. In complete mental solitude and great ignorance I found myself facing all the dread problems of human existence. For a long time my intense desire to remain a Christian predominated, and brought me back from each return to scepticism in a passion of repentance and prayer to Christ to take my life or my reason sooner than allow me to stray from the fold. In those days no such thing was heard of as "broad" interpretations of Scripture doctrines. To be a Christian then was to believe implicitly in the verbal inspiration of every word of the Bible, and to adore Christ as "very God of very God." Had anything like modern theories . . . been known to me at this crisis of my life, it is possible that the whole course of my spiritual history

would have been different. But Evangelical Christianity in 1840 presented itself as a thing to be taken whole or rejected wholly.

As time went on, I saw all that had made to me the supreme glory and joy of life fade out of it. In the summer after my twentieth birthday, I had reached the end of the long struggle. It left me with something as nearly like a *tabula rasa* of faith as can well be imagined. I definitely disbelieved in human immortality and in a supernatural revelation.

It is impossible to read such a passage without sadness and deep sympathy—sympathy for the young girl striving to be honest above all, even at the cost of that which made life sweet, and sadness that her experience should be typical of that of tens of thousands of the noblest spirits, from her day till now. You may meet women of middle age today in almost any cultured circle, who, if they chose to speak on a buried chapter in

their lives, could repeat almost word for word this sorrowful confession of the wrecking of a once precious faith. And no thoughtful man can have lived out half his life without having had occasion, over and again, to reflect on the tragedy of attempting to coerce faith in a completed system of authoritative doctrine.

It is the needlessness of it all that most impresses one. If only these troubled inquirers could have realized that the supreme object of faith is the revelation brought by Jesus Christ and witnessed by the voice of God in our own souls; that all other questions are of necessity subsidiary and by comparison even unimportant! They are the victims of a system of teaching that made the size of the ark, or the righteousness of oriental massacres, as necessary an object of belief as the words of Jesus on purity or forgiveness. They did not know that the teaching and example of Jesus might be trusted utterly, even though they should be inconsistent with Old Testament imprecations upon one's enemies. The defenses of their faith were no stronger than their weakest link, and indeed, it was on these weakest links that their attention became almost wholly centered. The primacy of Jesus and the supreme authority of his words were lost sight of in the dust of old controversies, and the attention of these seekers after truth was diverted to a multitude of irritating problems of minor importance, amid which they wandered as in a spiritual wilderness, until they had hopelessly lost sight of Him who is alone the light of the world.

We who have faced the confusing changes of the last thirty years should not suffer from a similar confusion! We have reached the day when we should see clearly that everything in the Bible is of value only as it leads up to and illuminates the message brought by Jesus Christ, in word and life. And we shall not go astray if we rest our entire faith on that foundation. It is of the utmost moment, however, that we should face the personality of Jesus with the most honest and earnest inquiry of which our minds are capable. It constitutes the central problem for the spiritual life, and the central fire from which must come all its warmth. The moral issues that group themselves around such a life of victory as that of the Man of Nazareth must needs be the most vital of all issues for human thought. And we shall do well to carry a little farther into detail our present inquiry as to what his character was, and what its bearings are upon our faith today. Wherein lies its strange compulsion upon our spirits and what witness does it offer to the value of the total message that he brought?

Probably most of us in our childhood took over our parents' estimate of Jesus, without special appreciation of his character, yet with a sincere loyalty of gratitude because we believe he gave himself to be our Savior. We believed on him as the one through whom alone we should be saved from sin and find our way to eternal life in the world to come. But as we have grown older, the years have greatly widened our understanding of what this present life means, as the field in which human character is to be wrought out. Its

temptations and perils, its seductive compromises, its wrongs and cruelties and abuses—all the fierceness of the struggle for justice and truth and mercy and love among men—have become for us enthrallingly real and vivid, so that our early anxiety to save our souls by believing on Jesus has grown dim and pale by comparison. We are so tumultuously pressed by the effort not only to keep our own life clean and honorable and courageous in the face of unrelenting temptation, but to have a little part also in the fight for the safety and welfare of others who are trodden down in the struggle, that the future life and its tremendous issues are of necessity pushed somewhat into the background.

On the other hand, the urgent need of moral strength, of stern integrity of character, in the unrelenting conflict with the world, the flesh, and the devil, is ever more clear to our apprehension. Moral inadequacy confronts us, not only within but on every side. There is need of courage and of unflinching loyalty to certain great causes, and we find timidity or indifference; we look for helpers of a passionate devotion to a high ideal, and we find self-interest or self-seeking breaking down their single-heartedness; we look for staunch friends, and find that they cannot be counted on in any emergency; we expect an unblemished integrity, and we have met too often with dishonor and duplicity. On the other hand, we have come to value beyond all expression the qualities that go to make up the true friends and helpers of men, the men and women whom we have learned to revere, whose unselfish sympathy with the sufferings

of the oppressed makes them the champions of God's poor. And we have come to value also the more hidden and fragrant qualities of the spirit, that, nourished in secret, make it more easy for us to believe in God and to feel that he is not far from every one of us.

As we have come through a whole generation of such experience of human nature, its mingled frailty and strength, its humiliation and victory, in the endless endeavor after character, we have reached a point where, if we are in deadly earnest, we find ourselves turning with the whole strength of our being to such a leader as Jesus Christ, simply because he was what he was—because all that we most long for and most revere in human life today we find in him. Such a champion of the weak he was; such a friend unto death, true as a sword-blade under strain, to those who loved him; of such gallant and unswerving courage under hopeless odds; so gentle and so firm; so faithful to duty, so true to the highest, so unstained with earth's corruption and so perfect in unselfish love.

Little did we know, as boys and girls, what all this meant in the story of Jesus—how costly such qualities are to win, and how hard to keep; how rare they are among men, but how unspeakably precious and comforting as we see them here and there reflected in lives about us. But now we know—that is, we faintly begin to know—through hard experience. At least we know enough to cleave to such a leader with all our heart and soul, because everything we must want in life is gathered up in him. We believe in him! It is not the belief of our childhood. Perhaps that was as

simple and as sincere, but it was not the same. This is not something that we were taught, or that we inherited, or that the church has handed down in the creeds; neither is it a faith accepted as the means of securing salvation. It is a part of our spontaneous self-expression, in the effort to be at our best. It is the fruit of our own soul's travail with life. It is what we have been taught of God while the years of moral struggle have been going on. It is the hunger for a good fellowship so strong and masterful as actually to be redeeming in its influence.

Consider, one by one, several of those qualities in him that made him what he was, and that are most evident and most appealing.

We cannot think of him at all, apart from his sympathy for men. It is the most outstanding characteristic of his life. He went about doing good—not professionally, but because he could not do otherwise, caring for people as he did. His chief interest in life was people—the men and women whom he met from day to day. His interest in them was so genuine, and his sympathy for their needs so warm, that he seems always to have been followed by needy folk. Some of us are left very much alone—to our books or our business or our own concerns, whatever they are; it is taken for granted, justly or unjustly, that we do not want to be troubled by the cares of others. There was no danger of making that mistake with Jesus. His was not the greatness that makes solitary. Such sympathy overflowed from him that in all that Syrian province it was manifest that the common people had no friend like

him. All sorts and conditions of men turned to him for sympathy and found it, from the babies whom their mothers brought for his blessing, to Pharisees and Roman officers, or broken-hearted souls who could trust none else.

All high-minded young people of today are talking much of social service, and already see themselves in coming years as unselfish helpers of society. But somehow, by the time one reaches middle age, the real lovers and servants of men are found to be very, very few, and most of them are what they are by contagion of this very quality in the life of Jesus. It is one of the great privileges of life to be in close touch with some of those noble souls who really love people, for their own sake, and devote themselves to others' good. It humbles us and makes us better men even to see them at their daily work. Perhaps there is nothing in life more manifestly divine than this. We cannot help believing that such love is of God. We profoundly covet something of it for ourselves. All of us believe wholeheartedly in people of that type; we cannot but do so, because of its divine appeal to that in us which is most divine.

But in Jesus we find this quality in its perfection. He was a helper of men before all else. He was even conscious of this himself, and serenely confident that he was able to give help if men would but allow him—even the kind of help that reaches behind all outward symptoms of misery to the root of the discomfort. As he said himself to a crowd of village people, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest."

When we were children it seemed to us a matter of course that Jesus should be the best man that ever lived, because he was the Son of God. But as we have grown older, do we not turn to a man like that with a great hunger both of longing and of affection? There is nothing in life more worthy, more beautiful, than the spirit that he had; and there is nothing more difficult to win, as we have proved. Yet still we aspire toward it, and our utter loyalty would go out to such a leader. He calls us as the voice of God would call us. Indeed, we feel that his appeal to us in this respect is, of a truth, God's voice.

It is a profound reassurance to find, as another side of Jesus' character, a quality of which we are almost as much in need, his reverence for righteousness. Nothing could dull his burning consciousness of the great issues of life and death that must be at stake in such a moral universe as this. He refused to treat men as though bread or ease or length of days, any or all of them, were the chief end of life. There was no element of weakness or superficiality about his compassion for human wretchedness. He was as sternly strong and wise in dealing with others as he was in dealing with himself. When he was faint with hunger, he remembered that there were obligations of honor upon him as a child of God, greater than any obligation to keep himself alive with bread unworthily obtained. When brutal cruelty was staring him in the face, which he might have escaped had he consulted the overwhelming impulse of the moment, he held himself patiently submissive, in order that the holy will of one greater than he might be carried

out. He involved even his closest friends in heart-breaking misfortune—as the world counts misfortune—because he saw that in no other way could they so serve God's purpose, or themselves become so great. It was because he was so firm with himself that he could be so true to the needs of others. His whole life's activity was guided not only by a matchless sympathy for men, but by a discernment of life's highest ends that made his sympathy as righteous and uplifting as it was tender.

With some of the humanitarians of our day we have the uneasy feeling that their heart has its way at the expense of their head. Their philosophy of life is superficial. They are passionately conscious of men's wrongs and sorrows, and in their eagerness to bring immediate relief they perceive but faintly certain immutable principles of social well-being, that cannot be ignored without disaster. If their love of men were but refined and guided by their sense of the holiness of God, as the abiding spring of human welfare, they would be better servants of their fellows. The leaders whom we shall need in the work of social reconstruction after the world war must be men and women great enough to see that peace and happiness for the nations can come only out of unflinching acceptance of a divine program for humanity. To be sternly true to the highest is even more humane than to be too compassionate to bear the thought of human suffering.

And in all this we recognize that Jesus reveals the perfect leadership. He kept himself clean, but he felt to the depth of his being the terrible penalties of uncleanness that God's law has provided.

Day by day he walked obediently in the way his Father chose; but his heart ached as he saw the misery that sprang up in a hundred forms because men refused to choose God's will. His pity for men went deep—far deeper than the surface sorrows that we find it so hard to look upon. His life was the very unfolding of compassion itself; but it was a compassion rooted in the eternal righteousness.

Just because of our human weakness and superficiality—our readiness to put ease and comfort before truth and honor, both for ourselves and for society—we feel the supremacy of such a character. It is a revelation of what God would have us be. It has in it an element of appeal that is, again, like the appeal of God to our own souls. We would be what Jesus was! We would fain make our own the same sources of strength that made him great. We believe in the correctness of the spiritual insight that made him wise and strong where most of us are feeble and shortsighted. His way is the way of truth. We have seen too much of well-meaning but incompetent leadership; so that if by any means we could come under such a prevailing influence as that of Jesus, it would be what we should desire as life's highest inspiration.

There is a very different quality that draws us to him as the years go by—his purity of soul. Even though we are not pessimistic in our judgment of human nature, yet, as our acquaintance with men increases, we come to see how fierce and unrelenting are the assaults of appetite and passion, and how scorching is the breath of that impurity by the side of whose moral devastation the

ravages of drink are as nothing. Many in our day do not perceive it because they make little effort to keep their own life clean. But just in proportion as one tries, as in the sight of a holy God, to keep his own heart and imagination unstained with evil, and still more as he joins in the struggle to make a clean life possible for the poor, or for the boys and girls of the coming generation, does he feel the supremacy and the wonder of such a character as Jesus, and the aching need for such an example and for such leadership before the eyes of men.

We are poisoned by the very atmosphere we breathe. But such was the self-control of Jesus that he held himself in a heavenly atmosphere, where the insidious miasma of the coarse ideals of his time could not affect him. We feel that even if the secret and fugitive desires of his heart had been suddenly exposed—the test no soul of man would willingly endure—he would have been unashamed. In the story of his life there is not a word that parades his virtue in this regard; and yet, as one reads that story thoughtfully, he recognizes not only how Jesus guarded his own heart so that he could see God, but how his strength was like the shadow of a great rock to the frail, sin-stained lives that turned to him for refuge as to the untempted God himself.

As we freely face Jesus Christ, and meditate upon this his example and his appeal, we feel that the eternal righteousness appeals to us through him. The fiction and drama of our day leave us fairly bewildered as to what is possible or even desirable for present-day society in the way of heroic self-restraint for

noble ends. But a half-hour's association with the personality of Jesus lifts us up to where we see, as by a divine illumination, what knightliness of unstained fidelity is the true estate of all the sons and daughters of God on earth. Do we not then turn to him with all the strength of our manhood if we are honest in the good fight? Would we not cleave to such a one with all our heart because he makes us see clearly what none other can make us see? The chiefest hope for the renovation of the low standards of society today is in the moral illumination and moral power that radiate from his personality.

How many a virtuous man or woman has been cold and hard as the very law itself toward those who have lost hold on virtue and joy together. They have thought to emphasize their own correctness by severity to the weaknesses of others. But this man of spotless soul, who loathed the cancerous evil that defiled the image of the Father in the children, was yet the very friend of sinners. We are drawn to him by the whole strength of our heart's affection, because he was so divinely gentle with the weak. We love him for his treatment of those whom society affected to abhor. They carried the marks of their degradation. Evil associations had stamped them with the odious vulgarity of commonplace vice. Jesus' own mother would have shrunk from them instinctively. He did not even shrink from them. The fire of his love and sympathy burned out his natural repugnance. He brought the very love of God visibly to their understandings, though without trace of compromise with their guilt. We rejoice to think

that the gentleness he showed was the gentleness of the holy God toward those distressed and scattered sheep whom he would fain recall. We cannot equal it, but we can reverence it in him, and almost would this trait alone in the character of Jesus bind us to him as his disciples.

We pause for a moment upon his courage. As the tide of life's anxieties and cares comes flooding in upon us with the years, as we see how many lives about us are weakened in their later stages by timidity, or discouragement, or actual fear, we appreciate more and more the calm, strong self-possession of Jesus in the presence of multiplied disappointment. He realized in his brief career the utmost use of his capacities, because to each day's task he brought a freshness of determination and hopefulness utterly undaunted by adverse conditions. The ideals of character and service that he had before him were not dulled or made inoperative by dejection or irresolution, but were absolutely efficient in the control of his will. How well we know the type of character that, like Amiel's, is full of high aspirations, but yet goes through life crippled and ineffective to the end, for sheer want of the needful courage to put them into practice.

Jesus was all that a flawless courage could have made him. He went his way and spoke his message as freely, as whole-heartedly, as though he were not bringing down upon his head an avalanche of hatred, from all the vested interests of his time. He feared neither church nor state, even though they were to crush him at the last. He could not be shaken by the favor or disfavor of the

crowd, nor made despondent by the fickleness of inconstant followers. There was in him that vital sense of power, that certainty of ultimate victory, that made him invulnerable to any of the paralyzing fears and anxieties that have dragged down so many gallant spirits in the fight for better things. Even when all seemed lost, and he knew that his enemies would be gloating over his sufferings before the week was out, he was calmly forgetful of himself in his loving ministry to his friends; the fear of death itself could not shake the confidence with which he bequeathed his peace and joy to his disciples.

Every one of us is conscious that this is what life ought to be; that every soul of man should have such undiscourageable purpose, such hope and cheer, in-

vincible in the face of misfortune, as to make life sweet and strong in spite of assailing fear. That would be life at its best—not a bovine contentment with unbroken ease, but a superb strength of self-possession to meet and overcome all enemies. Jesus alone realized it in its completeness. He could not know the foreboding dread of any evil future, because his whole being was perfectly gathered up in the will to do his Father's will, and in the confidence that that will could lead only to joy, even though sorrow met him on the way. If only we, too, could so far learn his spirit as to meet each day with new-born courage for the day's adventure! Only this, we are persuaded, is life as it was meant to be.

Chapter V. The Witness of the Life (*Concluded*)

We need to touch on only a single further quality of Jesus, that can hardly be overlooked in any estimate of the man—his loyalty to truth. Confucius has much to say of sincerity. Yet the influence of his teaching has been to produce a type of moral development, in the state and in society, in which insincerity seems to have been raised almost to the *n*th power. The influence of Jesus' character, after so long a time, is such that no man can drink deeply of his spirit and not fear a lie, or any sham or way of imposture. The official representatives of his religion, and his professed followers, have often enough feared the truth and tried to hold it at a distance. But it needs little knowledge of Jesus' life to see how false they were to his spirit. His closest personal friend said that truth came by Jesus Christ, such a flood of light did he throw on what it meant and what its obliga-

tions were. He said himself that he came to be a witness to the truth. He maintained that witness through all perils, and upheld it at the cost of life. He was himself as true as steel, so far as we can see, in every one of life's relations into which he entered. Indeed, he did not hesitate to claim that he was the truth. He felt himself to be the guiding light for deceived and bewildered humanity so that none who followed him should walk in darkness. His simplicity and singleness of character, as we read the story of his life, are beyond all question. He was honest and obedient to the call of truth in every fiber of his being. We cannot associate with him any sort of pretense or unreality or make-believe. He was sincerity itself, because he lived each hour in the eye of God. And all that we have ever imagined of fidelity to truth, and fearless, flawless honesty before God, is summed up in him.

All these features of the character of Jesus, so briefly touched upon, are unmistakable. We need no theologian to explain to us their message, nor any church teaching to enforce it on our attention or demand for it our assent. It lies upon the surface of the historic record. The character of Jesus is there for all to see. Men may affect to ignore it, but it is an affection as silly as it is unworthy. And for those of us who are in earnest in seeking honor and glory and immortality, for ourselves and others, it grips our attention inevitably, whatever may be the type of our religious experience, because it so vitally concerns the spirit's struggle for supremacy. If we are honest in our search for spiritual enlargement, we shall hold with a sort of life-and-death tenacity to this personality of Jesus, demanding to know what it means. Here is life at its maximum worth and value. How did it come to be, and what is its significance? It is of more practical concern to us than a mine of fabulous richness could be, for something more precious than gold is at stake. It has to do with the possibility for us, and for society, of love and purity and honor and truth and courage, and all the transmutation of baser elements that comes with faith in God. What sure conclusions may we reach regarding it, and what validation does it offer to the wider message that he brought?

The most obvious reflection comes from the familiar principle that what is intellectually unsound cannot lead in the end to what is morally sound. Here we have, in the personality of Jesus Christ, the most perfect moral soundness of which we have any knowledge. It has been tried by every test that mortal earnestness could devise, because the

issues that hang upon it are of such tremendous moment. And yet never were men so sure that there is no unsoundness in it, but the fullest health and energy of the spirit. It has been abused and ridiculed ever since that Roman soldier drew the picture of the figure with the ass's head, nailed to the cross. It has been an offense and a stumbling-block to heathen philosophers and to all the apostles of self-will, down to the Nietzscheans of today. Yet still, for all the world in humble earnest search for moral victory, it is the revelation of the supreme excellence possible to man.

The intellectual convictions from which it sprang are obvious, as we have seen; they were those of a complete and unswerving faith in the God and Father whom Jesus portrayed to the men of his time. They are set forth with clearness in the Sermon on the Mount, and throughout the gospel narratives. They were the root from which alone such a life could spring: the life was but the natural efflorescence of that perfect confidence in Almighty Love. After many centuries' experience of the moral strivings of men, we cannot conceive its development from any other source. Yet here is the conclusion with which we are confronted if the destructive criticism of our time is correct:

The root from which it sprang is a root of error. The conviction that nourished it to its completeness was a delusion. The character that grew out of it was therefore abnormal and improper to man as Nature would have him be, and its unflinching appeal to humanity in all ages marks out no way to higher life, but only to further misadjustment and misdevelopment. The profound attraction that it has for the

human spirit is therefore not reasonable or purposive or beneficent, but senseless and injurious, as the too seductive appeal of error must ever be. The light he seems to shed on life is but an *ignis fatuus* after all, and to follow it is to plunge into the hopeless dark.

As we stand face to face with the personality of Jesus in our moments of clearest spiritual insight, recognizing its appeal to all in us that is most divine, and listen with utter honesty for our soul's judgment, is this the conclusion in which we rest? Are we not rather compelled—not by any external authority but by “the impulsion of our own higher selves”—to admit both the divine beauty of Jesus' character and the validity of the convictions from which it grew?

We find ourselves at middle age still hard pressed by temptations and doubts and fears, looking more wistfully than ever before for a way of courage and strength and moral victory. And here we find it, in the way by which Jesus found it, the way of faith in God. There is a moral certitude that is as convincing to the spirit as is a mathematical demonstration to the intellect. Thus we are as sure that selfish indulgence at the cost of another's ruin is morally degrading as we are that two and two make four. We cannot demonstrate it, but we do not need to demonstrate it—we know it. And thus in facing Jesus Christ, in utter honesty of purpose, we are convinced that in him is not darkness, but light; not delusion, but truth; not mockery of human hopes, but hope itself. So we take as our own his childlike faith in a God who has made us for himself, and who asks from us only what he gives—love.

And not only does the character of Jesus Christ lead us to accept without argument the faith that shaped his life. Its perfect balance, its sanity and wisdom lead us to accept as valid the content of his own consciousness regarding himself. There is a convincing unity about his personality that will not let us regard him as half sane, half crazed—half wise, half foolish. The perfect humility with which he surrendered himself to his Father's leading, in the purpose to listen to his voice, and speak his words, and do his works, forbids us to believe that he was himself misguided, mistaken as to his own worth to men, or that he drew them astray because he was himself distraught. There is a limpid clearness about his own thought of himself, from the very first day of his ministry. He came as a Savior of men. He felt that in him was help; that he was a channel of the redeeming energy of God for sinful men. He did not try to efface himself, as did Confucius as the mere transmitter of a divine message. He besought men to confide in him, to take him as their Master, because he knew that he was the way to the Father. Life was in him, and light, and he knew that as they turned to him they found deliverance from the power of sin.

Nor was this relation of friend and helper to helpless men to be a matter of two or three years only, and within the tiny limits of his own travels. He obviously thought of it as a timeless relation, which his own death could not affect. His courage and hopefulness were largely based on this, that neither the Pharisees of his day, nor Herod nor Pilate nor Roman soldiers, could bring to an end his activities for the bruised and broken-hearted children of God. For a moment

they were to be visibly interrupted, but only that they might be taken up again with wider scope, after his bodily presence was withdrawn. It is impossible to read the record without finding evidence of this at every turn. Even in the Sermon on the Mount, in the only passage referring directly to himself, he speaks of the Day of Judgment as the time when many will hear from his lips the final assurance of their own unworthiness for the Kingdom. And in all conversations with his friends as to their future relations with him, he scarcely regarded the fact that he would be of the unseen world while they were still on earth. Evidently his self-consciousness was that of one who stood in a unique relation of sonship to God and of abiding saviorhood and mastership for men. He counted himself the Lord of that Kingdom for whose coming he bade men pray.

We do not need so much as to allude to the metaphysical problem of the trinity, or to discuss the question of his deity, but only to give due weight to the facts of his self-consciousness as they lie upon the surface. They were accepted by all his earliest friends and followers as indubitable, even if perplexing, and it was only in later generations that men strove so earnestly to explain them in creed and formula. It is not easy to see how we can believe in him, as a revelation of God's truth and grace for human life, and not trust these most deeply rooted convictions of his being—that he was sent of God to be a Savior, and the light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world. It was this conviction, inseparable from his faith in the One who sent him, that together with it made him what he was. We believe in it, and in his abiding

presence with men, if for no other reason, because we cannot honestly find a way to disbelieve in him.

There is also the further reflection that such unequalled moral soundness must have carried with it a spiritual insight of supreme clearness. It is the pure in heart who see God. It is those who walk most closely with him who, in the very nature of the case, must best understand his ways with men. And it follows of necessity from the supreme moral excellence of Jesus that he is the supreme spiritual teacher. Indeed, this is what it means, above all else, to believe in Jesus: that we should unhesitatingly recognize the unique and satisfying validity of his teachings. What is prayer? Our generation has a hundred answers. But to whose judgment shall we give most weight? Shall it be first of all Mrs. Eddy, or Mrs. Besant, or the latest exponent of the New Thought, or even the latest philosophical authority at Jena or at Harvard? Or shall we trust the spiritual insight of Jesus in things pertaining to God, as we trust the wisdom of no other authority? Is there a life beyond this life? If we believe in Jesus, we shall rest upon his simple confidence in the matter, though all the professors in two continents were to bewilder us with arguments. To believe in Jesus is to rest upon his clear teachings as on an unshakable foundation. And when our heart, in the day of trouble, cries out for some assurance that God is still behind this remorseless world that crashes on unconscious over our quiveringly sensitive lives, we shall rest upon that unwavering trust of Jesus in the Father's care even for the sparrow, and his tender love for men and women with hearts

made to love and suffer and seek comfort.

This is what it means, at its simplest, for us to believe in Jesus Christ, as in those far-off days when men and women were first drawn to him. Leaving on one side the Canaanites and Ninevites and the date of the prophecy of Daniel, and the genuineness of Second Peter, and the order of the documents behind the Gospels, it is to turn directly to the supreme revelation, to which all the spiritual literature of the race leads up, the life and message of him whom we rejoice to call our Lord. To do this in loyalty and love is to find ourselves face to face with a divine energy of life and light and love that proves its reality by its power. However inclusive our Latin may come to be, this must always be its center, as it is the heart of its defense.

In the desolate gorges of the mountains that hem in the Colorado Desert, where only cacti and desert shrubs are to be found, one is often surprised and delighted to come upon superb palms, springing out of the rocky soil. They may stand as solitary sentinels, or in groups of two or three, but sometimes they cluster together in shady groves of hundreds, of an indescribable wonder and beauty. Some have been deeply charred with fire, others have been scarred or wounded by men or animals. Any variety of deciduous tree under similar circumstances would long ago have been exterminated. Yet here they have continued through the centuries, the splintered blistering rock of the desert about their feet, but with their glorious crown of leaves mounting into the blue and rustling softly in the breeze.

The only explanation of their marvelous persistence is that they are endogens—they grow from within. Their life sap is not contained in a thin layer of external bark, always exposed to injury, but their every fiber from the heart outward is a channel of life and nourishment.

It is a true illustration of the Christian faith that grows up from an inner experience of the grace and truth that came by Jesus Christ. If there is any inner core of loyalty and affection in our being, it is vitalized and inspired by him who has in fact brought God into our life. Our confidence in him becomes an inner principle of faith and action, that tends always to grow more strong and fruitful. It would seem impossible for a faith so rooted not to grow with years, in spite of shock and accident, simply because it is a part of our truest self, and is not vulnerable to chance assaults that, however menacing at the time, can only after all reach and scar the surface.

There is a type of faith that is not so much like a living plant as like a globe of glass. An injury at one point will bring the whole to ruin. Even though the injury may come through the most prayerfully earnest search for truth, it is equally destructive. But to live thoughtfully to middle age is to find faith growing more simple—more like what it was in the days when men first followed after Jesus, because, in spite of priest and synagogue, they believed in him. It was his life that drew them then; and today it is still his life and words and works that draw us on to fuller understanding of his mission, and to that passionate gratitude for the forgiving love of God that underlies and vitalizes every most noble motive in human life.